



**GOVERNOR ROD BLAGOJEVICH
STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS
MARCH 12, 2003**

MR.SPEAKER; MR. PRESIDENT; DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE: IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO BE HERE THIS AFTERNOON, AND I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO RECOGNIZE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR PAT QUINN, SECRETARY OF STATE JESSE WHITE, ATTORNEY GENERAL LISA MADIGAN, COMPTROLLER DAN HYNES, AND TREASURER JUDY BARR TOPINKA.

MY WIFE, PATTI ---- COULDN'T BE HERE TODAY, ---- BECAUSE --- AS MANY OF YOU MAY KNOW, -- WE ARE EXPECTING A BABY -- ANY DAY NOW.

REST ASSURED, -- PATTI, -- AND THE BABY, -- HAVE ALREADY HEARD THIS SPEECH -- AND THE BABY -- IS IN NO HURRY TO GET HERE.

CARVED IN GRANITE AND MARBLE ACROSS THIS GREAT LAND --- IS OUR STATE MOTTO, AS IT APPEARED ON THE VERY FIRST STATE SEAL BACK IN 1818: --- "STATE SOVEREIGNTY, NATIONAL UNION."

AS MOTTOS GO, ---IT'S PRETTY GOOD.

**BUT I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT ---
THE UNOFFICIAL MOTTO OF ILLINOIS --- WAS SPOKEN MORE THAN 100 YEARS AGO, --
- BY THE GREAT CHICAGO ARCHITECT DANIEL BURNHAM, --- WHEN HE SAID THAT
HERE IN ILLINOIS, --- "WE MAKE NO SMALL PLANS."**

**THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A STATE -- AND -- WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A PEOPLE -- THAT
DREAM BIGGER DREAMS AND TRY MORE DARING SOLUTIONS --- THAN JUST ABOUT
ANYWHERE ELSE.**

**IN ILLINOIS, --- WE DIDN'T JUST BUILD SKYSCRAPERS.
WE BUILT THE TALLEST BUILDING IN THE WORLD.**

**WE DIDN'T JUST PRODUCE A PRESIDENT. ---
WE GAVE THE WORLD ABRAHAM LINCOLN.**

**WE DIDN'T JUST FARM THE LAND. ---
WE INVENTED A PLOW THAT CHANGED THE FACE OF AGRICULTURE.**

WE DIDN'T JUST STAND WITH WORKING PEOPLE.---WE HELPED SPARK A LABOR MOVEMENT THAT RAISED LIVING STANDARDS ACROSS THE GLOBE.

AND THOSE BIG DREAMS WERE REFLECTED IN OUR FAMILIES.

FOR TWO CENTURIES, --- PEOPLE LIKE MY FATHER --- CAME HERE BECAUSE THEY KNEW THAT HERE IN ILLINOIS, --- IF YOU WORK HARD, AND DO A GOOD JOB, --- YOU CAN MAKE IT --- IN AMERICA.

THOSE ARE THE DREAMS THAT CARRIED US TO THIS DAY.

**AND THE QUESTION BEFORE US
NOW IS ---**

**CAN WE STILL DREAM
BIG DREAMS --- AND TRY DARING SOLUTIONS --- AT A TIME WHEN OUR SPIRIT HAS BEEN DAMPENED, --- OUR STATE HAS BEEN BATTERED, --- AND OUR RESOURCES HAVE RUN SHORT.**

CAN WE MAKE A NEW BEGINNING FOR ILLINOIS?

MY ANSWER TO YOU TODAY IS A RESOUNDING: YES.

**DURING PREVIOUS TIMES, --- MY PREDECESSORS HAVE COME TO THIS CHAMBER DURING TIMES OF WAR, --- DURING TIMES OF RECESSION, ---DURING TIMES OF BUDGET CRISIS, --- EVEN DURING TIMES OF ETHICAL CRISES.
BUT RARELY HAVE WE BEEN CALLED UPON TO ADDRESS ALL FOUR OF THOSE THINGS IN A SINGLE YEAR.**

WE ALL KNOW ABOUT THE MISDEEDS AND MISSTEPS THAT GOT US INTO THIS MESS.

BUT I COME HERE MUCH LESS INTERESTED IN TELLING YOU WHAT KIND OF STATE WE'RE IN, --- AND A LOT MORE INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH ALL OF YOU --- TO CREATE THE KIND OF STATE WE CAN BE.

**I BELIEVE THAT EVEN THOUGH WE FACE A \$5 BILLION BUDGET DEFICIT; ---
EVEN THOUGH WE ARE SUFFERING THROUGH THE WORST RECESSION IN TWO DECADES; ---
EVEN THOUGH WE ARE STILL REELING FROM THE WORST SCANDAL IN MORE THAN A CENTURY: --
WE CAN BE A STATE WHERE EVERYONE WILLING TO WORK HARD HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EARN A DECENT, HONEST LIVING.**

WE CAN BE A STATE WHERE ALL OF OUR CHILDREN – NO MATTER WHAT THEIR BACKGROUND, --- NO MATTER HOW MUCH MONEY THEIR PARENTS MAKE – RECEIVE A QUALITY EDUCATION.

WE CAN BE A STATE WHERE EVERY PERSON – NO MATTER THEIR AGE OR THEIR TAX BRACKET – HAS ACCESS TO THE HEALTH CARE AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE THEY NEED.

WE CAN BE A STATE WHOSE GOVERNMENT IS HONEST, FAIR AND JUST.

**A STATE WITH INTEGRITY.
A STATE --- WE CAN TAKE PRIDE IN.**

HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

LET ME START BY TELLING YOU HOW WE ARE NOT GOING TO GET THERE.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET THERE BY POINTING FINGERS AT EACH OTHER.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET THERE WITH EMPTY PROMISES.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET THERE BY CUTTING CORNERS, OR CUTTING AND RUNNING.

WE ARE ONLY GOING TO GET THERE IF WE FACE UP TO OUR PROBLEMS, --- BE HONEST ABOUT OUR CHALLENGES, -- AND WORK TOGETHER --- TO MAKE THE TOUGH CHOICES THE PEOPLE OF ILLINOIS SENT US HERE TO MAKE.

TODAY, --- I OFFER A NEW APPROACH FOR GOVERNING THIS GREAT STATE.

I USE AS MY GUIDE THE SAME GUIDE USED BY OUR FAMILIES AND OUR BUSINESSES.

**WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH ---
WHAT DO THEY DO?**

THEY FOCUS ON THE THINGS THAT ARE REALLY IMPORTANT.

THIS AFTERNOON, --I WILL DETAIL FOUR AREAS WHERE I INTEND TO GET BACK TO BASICS.

FIRST ---

JOBS.

JOB CREATION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE CAN DO TO MOVE THIS STATE FORWARD.

SECOND --- SCHOOLS.

NO PARENT SHOULD WORRY THEIR CHILD WILL NOT GET A FAIR CHANCE AT FULFILLING THEIR POTENTIAL.

THIRD ---

HEALTH CARE.

WE WILL HELP OUR ELDERLY AFFORD PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE.

FOURTH ---

CRIME.

WE WILL LIVE IN A SAFER -- AND MORE JUST -- ILLINOIS.

BUT BEFORE WE SET A COURSE TO GET BACK TO THESE FOUR BASICS, ---

WE MUST FIRST RESTORE THE ETHICAL AND FISCAL INTEGRITY OF OUR STATE.

WE MUST BEGIN BY GIVING THE PEOPLE OF THIS STATE A REASON TO START BELIEVING AGAIN IN SPRINGFIELD.

BUSINESS AS USUAL ---

WILL NOT DO.

AFTER TWO MONTHS IN OFFICE, I CAN TELL YOU THAT THE CLEAN UP OF STATE GOVERNMENT IS WELL UNDER WAY, --THANKS TO MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN THIS CHAMBER, --- ESPECIALLY LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR PAT QUINN AND ATTORNEY GENERAL LISA MADIGAN.

WE APPOINTED A SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR FOR EMPLOYMENT AND PERSONNEL -- MARY LEE LEAHY -- TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERY STATE JOB HAS ONLY ONE PURPOSE: --- TO SERVE THE PEOPLE, NOT THE POWERFUL.

WE'VE ENDED LATE-TERM PATRONAGE APPOINTMENTS. AND EMPLOYEES WITH POWERFUL POLITICAL CONNECTIONS BUT VIRTUALLY USELESS JOBS WERE SHOWN THE DOOR.

WE'VE TAKEN ON WASTE AND ABUSE AT STATE UNIVERSITIES.

WE'VE MANDATED ETHICS TRAINING FOR ALL EMPLOYEES OF STATE AGENCIES.

AND WE'VE PUT IN PLACE WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION SO WE CAN STOP CORRUPTION AS IT HAPPENS, INSTEAD OF LEARNING ABOUT IT AFTER THE FACT.

WE'VE CREATED THE POSITION OF INSPECTOR GENERAL AND RESTRUCTURED THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART SO THE POSITION REPORTS DIRECTLY TO ME.

NO ONE IS GOING TO GET IN THE WAY OF OUR QUEST TO CLEAN UP STATE GOVERNMENT.

WE'RE WORKING WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL LISA MADIGAN TO BUILD ON THESE EFFORTS.

AND TO GIVE OUR ETHICS INITIATIVES TEETH.--- I'M PROPOSING LEGISLATION TO CREATE A NEW BOARD OF ETHICS. --

THIS BOARD WILL MAKE SURE THAT VIOLATORS GET A WHOLE LOT MORE --- THAN A SLAP ON THE WRIST, HANDING DOWN SUSPENSION AND FIRING RECOMMENDATIONS SWIFTLY AND FAIRLY IN CASES OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR BY ANY STATE EMPLOYEE AT ANY LEVEL.

RESTORING INTEGRITY DOESN'T JUST MEAN ETHICAL INTEGRITY -- IT ALSO MEANS FISCAL INTEGRITY. THIS IS OUR STATE'S DARKEST FISCAL HOUR.

ILLINOIS TODAY FACES THE LARGEST BUDGET DEFICIT IN OUR LONG HISTORY -- NEARLY \$5 BILLION.

TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF HOW BIG OUR BUDGET DEFICIT IS TODAY, -- WE COULD CLOSE EVERY SINGLE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY AND EVERY PRISON IN ILLINOIS, -- AND STILL NOT FULLY CLOSE THE BUDGET GAP.

SINCE I TOOK OFFICE TWO MONTHS AGO, I HAVE DIRECTED THE BUREAU OF THE BUDGET TO REVIEW EVERY STATE CONTRACT AND REVIEW COST OVERRUNS.

I'VE BEGUN THE PROCESS OF REFORMING OUR STATE'S BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

I'VE ORDERED ADMINISTRATIVE CUTS OF

10 PERCENT ON AVERAGE FROM EVERY SINGLE DEPARTMENT AND STATE AGENCY.

I'VE INSTITUTED A HIRING FREEZE AND I'VE HALTED THE PRACTICE OF BUYING NEW CARS FOR STATE EMPLOYEES.

LESS THAN ONE MONTH FROM TODAY, I WILL PRESENT TO THIS CHAMBER A BALANCED BUDGET IN FULL, --- COMPREHENSIVE DETAIL.

I DIDN'T CREATE THE BUDGET MESS WE ARE LIVING THROUGH TODAY. BUT I PROMISE YOU THIS: BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN AND WE WILL SOLVE IT.

AS WE DEAL WITH THE FISCAL CRISIS,-- WE CANNOT LOSE SIGHT OF OUR GOAL OF MAKING ILLINOIS A BETTER PLACE. IT IS WHY WE SERVE.

I REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE NOTION THAT IN TOUGH TIMES --- GOVERNMENT MUST ABANDON THE COMMITMENT TO GIVE PEOPLE THE TOOLS TO BUILD A BETTER LIFE.

TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY AND STRUGGLE ARE WHEN PEOPLE NEED US THE MOST.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY AND GETTING BACK TO BASICS BEGINS FIRST AND FOREMOST WITH CREATING JOBS, --- AND WE HAVE OUR WORK CUT OUT FOR US.

LAST YEAR, OUR STATE LOST 23,000 MANUFACTURING JOBS. IF WE DO NOTHING, BY 2008, OUR PROJECTIONS SHOW THAT WE COULD LOSE 150,000 MORE.

SMALL BUSINESSES HAVE BEEN HIT HARD BY THE RECESSION AND LARGE EMPLOYERS IN NEARLY EVERY SECTOR HAVE HAD TO CUT BACK.

IN RECENT YEARS, ILLINOIS HAS NOT OFFERED THE MODEL OF FLEXIBILITY AND EFFICIENCY THAT OUR ECONOMY REQUIRES.

IN THE NEXT DECADE, WE ANTICIPATE THAT TWO OUT OF THREE JOBS WILL BE CREATED BY SMALL BUSINESSES.

NO ONE UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE OF SMALL BUSINESS BETTER --- THAN SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER FRANK WATSON, --- WHOSE GRANDFATHER OPENED WATSON'S DRUGS IN GREENVILLE IN 1881.

THAT PHARMACY IS STILL DOING BUSINESS TODAY.

SMALL BUSINESSES ARE THE ENGINE TO OUR GROWTH, AND WE NEED TO BRING MORE OF THOSE JOBS TO ILLINOIS.

WORKING WITH PEOPLE LIKE FRANK WATSON, WE WILL.

THIS WEEK, WE WILL INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO BUILD A \$200 MILLION "ILLINOIS OPPORTUNITY FUND" THAT WILL ATTRACT THE PRIVATE INVESTMENT OUR STATE DESPERATELY NEEDS.

IT WILL HELP JUMPSTART INDUSTRIES AND FOCUS ON NEW TECHNOLOGIES THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL --- TO NOT ONLY PUT PEOPLE BACK TO WORK, ---BUT TO CREATE THE SORT OF JOBS THAT WILL ATTRACT YOUNG PEOPLE TO OUR STATE.

I'M GOING TO WORK WITH YOU --- THE LEGISLATURE --- TO PASS THIS BILL AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE SO WE CAN HAVE THE FUND UP AND RUNNING WITHIN A YEAR.

THERE WILL BE NO MORE MISSED BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES.

WE SOMETIMES FORGET THAT IT WAS JUST OVER A DECADE AGO THAT THE WEB BROWSER WAS CREATED IN A LAB AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS.

AND YET WHEN YOU THINK OF THE NATION'S HI-TECH CENTERS YOU THINK OF SEATTLE, YOU THINK OF BOSTON, YOU THINK OF AUSTIN, AND YOU THINK OF SILICON VALLEY.

SO WHY NOT HERE?

ILLINOIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN -- AND ITS GOING TO BE -- SILICON PRAIRIE.

THAT CAN START WITH NANOTECHNOLOGY, WHICH IS THE MANIPULATION OF MATTER AT THE ATOMIC LEVEL.

SCIENTISTS TELL US THAT IT MAY ONE DAY ALLOW US TO MAKE MATERIAL THAT IS 100 TIMES STRONGER THAN STEEL AT A FRACTION OF THE WEIGHT, ---

THAT IT CAN STORE ALL THE INFORMATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO ON A CHIP THE SIZE OF A SUGAR CUBE --

OR CAN EVEN DETECT CANCER WHEN IT'S ONLY A FEW CELLS IN SIZE.

GUESS WHERE THE CENTER OF THE NANOTECHNOLOGY UNIVERSE IS TODAY?

RIGHT HERE IN ILLINOIS.

[JOKE]

NANOTECHNOLOGY IS JUST ONE OF MANY AREAS THE ILLINOIS OPPORTUNITY FUND WILL TARGET.

THERE ARE COUNTLESS ENTREPRENEURS ACROSS THIS STATE WITH GOOD IDEAS WHO JUST NEED A CHANCE TO SHOW WHAT THEY CAN DO.

TODAY, I AM ANNOUNCING THE CREATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTERS IN SIX ILLINOIS COMMUNITIES: ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE IN ROCKFORD, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS IN CHICAGO, WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY IN MACOMB, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY IN CARBONDALE AND SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY IN EDWARDSVILLE.

TWO MONTHS FROM TODAY, THE FIRST OF THESE CENTERS WILL BE OPERATIONAL AND MAKING AN IMPACT.

TWO YEARS FROM TODAY, THERE WILL BE TWENTY.

AS I PROMISED DURING MY CAMPAIGN, WE'RE GOING TO EQUIP THESE CENTERS WITH FUNDING TO PROVIDE \$5,000 BUSINESS PLANNING GRANTS TO 400 ENTREPRENEURS ACROSS THE STATE.

WE CAN ALSO CREATE JOBS BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ONE OF ILLINOIS' LONG-STANDING INDUSTRIES: --- COAL MINING.

FOR MOST OF THE PAST CENTURY, WE WERE TAUGHT TO BELIEVE THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO CREATE JOBS AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AT THE SAME TIME. ---

BECAUSE WE COULDN'T BURN COAL AS CLEANLY AS THE LAW REQUIRED, OVER FIFTY MINES --- AND THOUSANDS OF JOBS WERE LOST -- SEEMINGLY FOREVER.

BUT TODAY, TECHNOLOGY WILL ALLOW OUR POWER PLANTS TO BURN ILLINOIS COAL AGAIN, ---

BRINGING BACK THOSE JOBS --- AND REVITALIZING COMMUNITIES ACROSS SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL ILLINOIS.

ILLINOIS HAS THE SECOND RICHEST COAL RESERVES IN THE NATION.

IF NEW STATE INCENTIVES COULD PERSUADE JUST FIVE OF OUR PLANTS TO INVEST IN THIS TECHNOLOGY --- AND CREATE MINE MOUTH GENERATION PLANTS, --- MANY COAL MINES COULD REOPEN, AND WE COULD CREATE 20,000 NEW JOBS.

**THERE ARE
EIGHT HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS IN INCENTIVES AVAILABLE.**

WE SHOULD WORK TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR COMPANIES TO ACCESS THOSE INCENTIVES.

AT THE SAME TIME, THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE JOBS IN THE TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY, --- ESPECIALLY THROUGH THE EXPANSION OF O'HARE.

MORE GOODS AND PASSENGERS PASSING THROUGH OUR STATE COULD MEAN AS MANY AS 195,000 NEW JOBS AND AS MUCH AS \$20 BILLION DOLLARS IN ECONOMIC GROWTH.

IT'S TIME WE TURN THE EXPANSION OF O'HARE AIRPORT INTO A REALITY.

AND IN AGRICULTURE, --- WE CAN USE NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO TURN GRAIN INTO ETHANOL AND OTHER VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS.

ILLINOIS HAS THE NATION'S SECOND HIGHEST OUTPUT OF CORN AND SOY BEAN PRODUCTS.

OUR ILLINOIS OPPORTUNITY FUND CAN HELP FARMERS EXPLORE NEW PRODUCTS AND NEW MARKETS FOR THE CORN AND SOYBEANS THAT GROW HERE IN SUCH ABUNDANCE.

WE ARE GOING TO RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE.

**A PERSON WORKING
40 HOURS A WEEK, 52 WEEKS A YEAR -- SHOULD NOT LIVE IN POVERTY.**

YOU CANNOT RAISE A FAMILY, -- YOU CANNOT PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE, -- YOU CANNOT PUT SHOES ON YOUR CHILDREN'S FEET --ON \$10,712 PER YEAR.

RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE FROM \$5.15 AN HOUR TO \$6.50 AN HOUR --- AT LEAST GIVES FAMILIES A FIGHTING CHANCE.

AND SPEAKING OF WAGES, --- IT IS TIME WOMEN RECEIVE EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

WOMEN MAKE UP MORE THAN HALF OF OUR WORKFORCE.

THERE IS NO REASON WHY THEY SHOULD EARN JUST 69 CENTS FOR EVERY DOLLAR A MAN MAKES.

CREATING OPPORTUNITY --- DOESN'T JUST MEAN JOBS; -- IT ALSO MEANS -- EDUCATION.

NO MATTER HOW MANY JOBS WE CREATE, NONE OF IT MATTERS IF WE CAN'T GIVE OUR CHILDREN THE EDUCATION THEY NEED TO MAKE IT.

EVERY EDUCATIONAL EXPERT AGREES -- THAT THE EARLIER A CHILD BEGINS TO LEARN, -- IN CHILD CARE AND IN PRE-SCHOOL, -- THE BETTER HIS OR HER CHANCES ARE OF SUCCEEDING.

TODAY, I AM ANNOUNCING A NEW INITIATIVE THAT WILL PROVIDE ACCESS TO PRESCHOOL FOR EVERY AT RISK CHILD IN OUR STATE.

IN AN IDEAL WORLD, PRESCHOOL FOR EVERY CHILD WOULD BEGIN --- TOMORROW.

BUT AN IDEAL WORLD DOESN'T `OPERATE ON A \$5 BILLION BUDGET DEFICIT.

THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO PHASE IN UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL. --- BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT.-- THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE CAN DO IS TO GET STARTED, ---AND WORKING WITH LEGISLATIVE LEADERS, LIKE SENATE PRESIDENT EMIL JONES, WHO HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CHAMPION OF EDUCATION, ---THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE DOING.

NEXT TO A LOVING PARENT, NO ONE IS MORE IMPORTANT TO A CHILD'S UPBRINGING THAN A GOOD TEACHER.

WITHOUT QUALITY TEACHERS, EVERY EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE IN THE WORLD WON'T SUCCEED.

ILLINOIS WILL HAVE TO FILL 44,000 TEACHING POSITIONS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

RELYING ON THE TRADITIONAL METHODS OF HIRING AND RECRUITING WON'T BE ENOUGH.

THAT'S WHY I'M CREATING A PROGRAM THAT WILL PROVIDE \$5,000 ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS TO JUNIORS AND SENIORS IN COLLEGE --- WHO AGREE TO TEACH IN HARD-TO-FILL POSTS IN ILLINOIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS -- FOR FIVE YEARS ---. NOT ONE YEAR, ---FIVE YEARS.

FOR THOSE WHO CAN TEACH SUBJECTS LIKE READING AND SCIENCE IN COMMUNITIES WHERE THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS, --- WE'LL INCREASE THE SCHOLARSHIP TO \$10,000.

THE FINAL PIECE OF PROVIDING OUR CHILDREN WITH THE EDUCATION THEY DESERVE COMES FROM INSIDE THE HOME.

SPEAKING AS A PARENT MYSELF, I KNOW HOW EASY IT IS TO FEEL OVERWHELMED IN THIS WORLD TODAY.

PARENTS WORRY ABOUT THE MUSIC THEIR CHILDREN LISTEN TO, --- THE MOVIES THEY SEE, -- THE TELEVISION SHOWS THEY WATCH, --- THE WEB SITES THEY VISIT.

FOR ALL THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE IN THIS WORLD, --- OUR KIDS NEED OUR LOVE --- AND ATTENTION --- AND DISCIPLINE -- MORE THAN EVER.

I KNOW EVERY PARENT NEEDS AND WANTS TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION.

**WITH ALL OF THE RIGORS AND REQUIREMENTS, THEY FACE --- THAT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY. ---
SO WE'RE GOING TO HELP.**

I WILL INTRODUCE LEGISLATION THAT WILL EXPAND THE AMOUNT OF LEAVE TIME PARENTS CAN TAKE FROM WORK TO ATTEND SCHOOL ACTIVITIES LIKE MEETING WITH COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS, --- TO BE MORE IN TOUCH WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THEIR CHILDREN'S LIVES.

CURRENTLY, THE STANDARD IS EIGHT HOURS A YEAR OF UNPAID LEAVE.

MY LEGISLATION WOULD INCREASE IT --- TO THREE DAYS.

I'M GOING TO START BY LEADING BY EXAMPLE: ---

AS OF TODAY, ALL EMPLOYEES WORKING FOR MY OFFICE OR STATE EXECUTIVE AGENCIES WILL HAVE THOSE CRUCIAL THREE DAYS TO DEVOTE --EXCLUSIVELY --- TO MEETING WITH THEIR CHILDREN'S TEACHERS AND DOING THE -- LITTLE THINGS --THAT EVERY PARENT WOULD LIKE TO DO,-- BUT NEVER SEEM TO GET THE CHANCE.

OUR MESSAGE TO PARENTS IS UNEQUIVOCAL: --

WE SUPPORT YOU.

THIS WEEK, I WILL SIGN INTO EFFECT A PROCLAMATION CALLING ON ALL ILLINOIS SCHOOLS TO ADOPT THE NATIONAL PTA'S STANDARD FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

THIS PROCLAMATION WILL CALL UPON ALL OF OUR SCHOOLS TO ADOPT MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL IS FREQUENT AND MEANINGFUL.

IN ORDER TO HELP OUR SCHOOLS MEET THE NATIONAL PTA STANDARDS, --- I'M ALSO ANNOUNCING THE CREATION OF A NEW WEB-BASED SYSTEM --- THAT WILL ENABLE PARENTS TO ACCESS INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN'S CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES, --- HOMEWORK ---PERFORMANCE ---AND ATTENDANCE OVER SECURE WEBSITES.

AND FINALLY, WE WILL EXPLORE OTHER COMMON SENSE SOLUTIONS, SUCH AS PROVIDING EVERY TEACHER --- A VOICEMAIL BOX ---SO PARENTS CAN LEAVE MESSAGES AND HAVE THEIR CALLS RETURNED.

THE FISCAL CRISIS WILL MAKE IMPLEMENTING SOME OF THIS DIFFICULT, --- BUT WE'RE GOING TO EXPLORE EVERY AVENUE TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

JUST AS OUR CHILDREN NEED ACCESS TO A DECENT EDUCATION, -- OUR SENIORS -- AND OUR WORKING FAMILIES -- NEED ACCESS TO DECENT HEALTH CARE.

THAT STARTS WITH PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE.

THE PHRASE --- 'STICKER SHOCK' -- DOESN'T BEGIN TO DESCRIBE WHAT SO MANY PEOPLE FEEL WHEN THEY GO TO THE PHARMACY TO FILL A PRESCRIPTION.

WORKING WITH SPEAKER MADIGAN, WHO HAS BEEN A TIRELESS FIGHTER AND A STRONG LEADER ON THIS ISSUE AND SO MANY OTHERS, ---

WE ARE GOING TO BRING DOWN THE PRICE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, ONCE AND FOR ALL.

IN MY CAMPAIGN, I SAID WE WERE GOING TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR BULK PURCHASING POWER.

THIS WEEK, -- THAT CHANGE BEGINS.

I WILL SIGN AN EXECUTIVE ORDER TO CREATE A NEW SPECIAL ADVOCATE POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING A MUCH BETTER DEAL ON THE NEARLY TWO BILLION DOLLARS PER YEAR IN PRESCRIPTION DRUGS PURCHASED BY THIS STATE.

RIGHT NOW, ---ILLINOIS RECEIVES A MEAGER 1.7% REBATE ON DRUG PURCHASES -- THE WORST -- IN THE NATION.

OTHER STATES RECEIVE MORE THAN -- TEN TIMES THAT AMOUNT.

ON BEHALF OF OUR NEW SPECIAL ADVOCATE, I'VE GOT A MESSAGE FOR THE BIG DRUG COMPANIES: --

"IT'S TIME TO RENEGOTIATE."

AND AS PROMISED IN MY CAMPAIGN, I WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH THE LEGISLATURE TO CREATE A PRESCRIPTION DRUG CARD.

BY POOLING THEIR BUYING POWER --- THIS WILL ALLOW SENIORS TO BUY PRESCRIPTIONS AT REDUCED RATES AT NO EXTRA COST TO THE STATE.

AND IT'S TIME TO FINALLY EXPAND OUR CIRCUIT BREAKER PROGRAM TO COVER ALL PRESCRIPTIONS FOR OUR MOST NEEDY SENIORS.

LAST YEAR, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT --- GAVE US A HEAD START ---

TO PROVIDE EXPANDED COVERAGE FOR MOST SENIORS ENROLLED IN THIS PROGRAM.

THIS YEAR, I WILL WORK WITH OUR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO GET COVERAGE FOR 50,000 MORE SENIORS.

PROVIDING BETTER ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE DOESN'T END WITH REDUCING THE PRICE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.

IT ALSO MEANS DECENT HEALTH CARE.

EVERY PARENT KNOWS --- WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE A SICK CHILD.

**TODAY, I AM COMMITTING ---
TO EXPAND THE KIDCARE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE HEALTHCARE TO AS MANY AS 20,000 MORE CHILDREN IN THE STATE.**

I WILL ALSO COMMIT TO A FULL EXPANSION OF THE STATE'S FAMILYCARE PROGRAM WITHIN THREE YEARS TO PROVIDE UP TO 300,000 WORKING PARENTS WITH HEALTHCARE COVERAGE.

BY FAILING,--- OVER THE YEARS, --- TO FULLY INVEST IN THESE PROGRAMS OUR STATE HAS LOST OVER 150 MILLION DOLLARS IN FEDERAL FUNDING THAT HAS BEEN REDIRECTED TO OTHER STATES.

NOT ANYMORE.

**GETTING BACK TO BASICS MEANS CREATING JOBS. --
IT MEANS BETTER SCHOOLS.--
IT MEANS BETTER HEALTH CARE. --**

IT ALSO MEANS --- SAFER STREETS.

**THIS YEAR, --- A RECORD NUMBER OF OFFENDERS – OVER 35,000 – WILL BE RELEASED FROM ILLINOIS PRISONS. --
HALF OF THOSE RELEASED --- HALF --- WILL BE RE-INCARCERATED WITHIN THREE YEARS.**

**ASK ANY FORMER PROSECUTOR -- ASK TOM CROSS, OUR HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER --- AND HIMSELF ---
A FORMER PROSECUTOR ---WHO HAS LED THE FIGHT ON CRIME IN THIS CHAMBER --
AND THEY'LL TELL YOU THAT KEEPING CRIMINALS FROM STRIKING AGAIN IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS PUTTING THEM BEHIND BARS IN THE FIRST PLACE.**

THAT'S WHY I'M LAUNCHING --- "OPERATION SPOTLIGHT" ---- TO TIGHTEN SUPERVISION, -- INCREASE HOW OFTEN PAROLEES HAVE TO CHECK IN WITH PAROLE OFFICERS, -- AND MAKE IT EASIER TO IMPOSE SANCTIONS LIKE ELECTRONIC MONITORING.

ILLINOIS LEADS THE NATION IN DRUG-RELATED CRIMES.

WE SHOULD LEAD THE NATION IN DRUG CRIME PREVENTION.

TODAY, I AM ANNOUNCING THAT WE WILL REOPEN --- THE SHERIDAN PRISON AS A NATIONAL MODEL INSTITUTION AIMED SOLELY AT DETERRING DRUG CRIME.

DRUG ADDICTS RETURN TO THE STREETS --- ONLY TO LAND RIGHT BACK IN JAIL --- AFTER FINDING NEW VICTIMS AND COMMITTING NEW CRIMES.

SINCE MORE CRIMINALS ARE IN ILLINOIS PRISONS FOR DRUG-RELATED OFFENSES -- THE MORE WE REDUCE DRUG CRIME, --- THE SAFER OUR STREETS WILL BE.

AND WE ARE GOING TO TARGET CLUB DRUGS BEFORE IT BECOMES AN EPIDEMIC.

**THE USE OF ECSTASY AMONG TEENS IS UP
71 PERCENT
SINCE 1999.**

**AND YET ILLINOIS' CURRENT --- CLUB DRUG TASK FORCE -- IS FUNDED PURELY BY
FEDERAL DOLLARS.
FURTHERMORE, THE TASK FORCE HAS ONLY ONE ILLINOIS STATE TROOPER ON IT.
--- ONE.**

**OUR NEW INITIATIVE, -- PROJECT X, -- WILL NOT JUST MATCH FEDERAL SPENDING
ON ELIMINATING CLUB DRUGS --- IN THIS STATE -- IT WILL TRIPLE IT.**

**WE ARE GOING TO USE THE FULL FORCE OF FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LAW
ENFORCEMENT TO CRACK DOWN ON THE SALE, DISTRIBUTION AND USE OF
ECSTASY.**

**WE ARE GOING TO DEVELOP STATEWIDE TRACKING SYSTEMS TO IDENTIFY WHERE
IT IS SOLD.**

**AND WE WILL TARGET AREAS WHERE IT IS USED, --STARTING WITH COLLEGE
CAMPUSES.**

**DRUGS MAY BE THE SCOURGE OF OUR SOCIETY, BUT OUR FIGHT TO MAKE ILLINOIS
SAFER --- CANNOT END THERE.**

**LAST YEAR, -- MORE THAN 16 WOMEN -- REPORTED BEING RAPED IN ILLINOIS ON
AVERAGE --EACH DAY.**

**THIS IS NOT JUST A STAGGERING FIGURE.
IT IS AN OUTRAGE, -- AND SOMETHING --- NO CIVILIZED SOCIETY SHOULD STAND
FOR.**

**IT'S WHY I'M SUPPORTING ATTORNEY GENERAL LISA MADIGAN'S EFFORTS TO
ESTABLISH A PROGRAM OF LIFETIME PAROLE -- THAT SAYS TO SEX OFFENDERS: -- IF
YOU COMMIT A SEX CRIME, -- WE'RE GOING TO KEEP TABS ON YOU, -- EVERY DAY, ---
FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.**

**IN OUR QUEST TO MAKE OUR STREETS SAFE, WE HAVE TO TAKE AN HONEST LOOK
AT ALL ASPECTS OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.**

I AM A FORMER PROSECUTOR.

I HAVE SEEN THE DEVASTATION THAT CRIME WREAKS UPON OUR FAMILIES.

BUT IT'S ALMOST INCONCEIVABLE THAT AT LEAST 13 PEOPLE WERE ON DEATH ROW IN ILLINOIS AND WERE NEARLY EXECUTED FOR CRIMES THEY DID NOT COMMIT.

I SUPPORT THE DEATH PENALTY.

**BUT I ALSO SUPPORT MAINTAINING THE CURRENT MORATORIUM.
WE NEED A BETTER SYSTEM. WE NEED A SYSTEM THAT WORKS.**

TOGETHER, --- THE LEGISLATURE AND I WILL WORK TO REFORM THE SYSTEM.

**AS WE CONFRONT THE CHALLENGES FACING ILLINOIS, WE CANNOT FORGET ABOUT THE GRAVE CHALLENGES FACING THIS NATION.
AS WE MEET HERE TODAY,
250,000 AMERICAN TROOPS STAND ON THE BORDER OF IRAQ, --- INCLUDING MANY ILLINOISANS.**

**THEY ARE IN OUR THOUGHTS.
THEY ARE IN OUR HEARTS.
AND WE ALL PRAY FOR THEIR SAFE RETURN HOME.**

**BUT WE KNOW THAT THE THREAT DOESN'T LIE SOLELY ACROSS THE OCEANS.
TERRORISM IS SOMETHING WE HAVE TO THINK ABOUT AT HOME TOO.**

THAT'S WHY I APPOINTED FORMER SENATOR CARL HAWKINSON TO LEAD OUR PUBLIC SAFETY AND COUNTER-TERRORISM EFFORTS.

**HOPEFULLY, WE'LL NEVER EXPERIENCE A TERRORIST ATTACK ON OUR SOIL.
BUT WE CAN'T JUST --- RELY ON HOPE.**

THAT IS WHY I AM ANNOUNCING THE CREATION OF A STATEWIDE TERRORISM INTELLIGENCE CENTER IN SPRINGFIELD.

**WE CAN DO MORE TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF ILLINOIS FROM A TERRORIST ATTACK -- BUT IT'S GOING TO TAKE
24-HOUR,
7-DAY-A-WEEK INTELLIGENCE AND TEAMWORK WITH THE FBI, THE CIA AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.**

THIS CENTER WILL BE A MODEL FOR HOW NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CAN WORK TOGETHER TO KEEP US SAFE.

NOW, -- I'VE LAID OUT AN AMBITIOUS AGENDA HERE TODAY.

BUT THIS AGENDA -- AND THESE PROPOSALS --- ARE NOT ONLY WORTHY -- THEY ARE ACHIEVABLE --- AND THEY ARE AFFORDABLE.

IN FACT, -- THE COST TO THE STATE OF THE PROPOSALS I'VE MADE TODAY --- TOTALS \$88 MILLION.

**WITH A NEARLY
\$5 BILLION DEFICIT --, I DON'T PROPOSE THEM LIGHTLY.**

BUT THESE ARE NOT ONLY INVESTMENTS WE CAN AFFORD TO MAKE – THESE ARE INVESTMENTS -- WE CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO MAKE.

WE WILL BALANCE THE BUDGET --- WITHOUT AN INCREASE IN THE INCOME OR SALES TAX --- BECAUSE WE CANNOT BURDEN -- THE TAXPAYERS WITH THE FULL WEIGHT OF FIXING THE MESS CREATED BY THOSE WHO LED THEM ASTRAY.

BUT WE ALSO CANNOT PUNISH THE TAXPAYERS -- BY USING THIS CRISIS AS AN EXCUSE FOR INACTION.

YES, -- THE BUDGET CRISIS IS FORCING US TO TEMPER OUR AGENDA.

BUT WE MUST MOVE FORWARD.

IT WON'T BE EASY TO BALANCE THE BUDGET, --- IT WON'T BE EASY TO MAKE PROGRESS ON THESE TOUGH ISSUES, --- BUT WE WILL.

BEING GOVERNOR MEANS MAKING TOUGH CHOICES – IT MEANS NOT BEING ABLE TO MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY ALL OF THE TIME.

SOMETIMES IT EVEN MEANS MAKING SOME PEOPLE --- UNHAPPY.

BUT THE CITIZENS OF ILLINOIS CALLED FOR CHANGE, --- AND THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO DELIVER.

THAT CHANGE CAN COME IF WE WORK TOGETHER.

I'M REMINDED OF THAT OLD ABBOTT AND COSTELLO ROUTINE ---

IN WHICH ABBOTT --- IS IN ONE END OF A BOAT, --- AND COSTELLO IS IN THE OTHER END.

AND ALL OF A SUDDEN, --- THE BOAT SPRINGS A LEAK IN COSTELLO'S END.

ABBOTT LOOKS AT THE AUDIENCE AND SAYS, "I SURE AM GLAD THAT LEAK ISN'T ON MY END OF THE BOAT."

WELL, WE'RE KIND OF IN THE SAME SITUATION.

AS DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS, WE MAY BE SITTING ON OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL SIDES, -- BUT WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT TODAY.

WE WILL SINK OR SWIM TOGETHER.

AND THAT'S --- EXACTLY HOW IT SHOULD BE.

I DON'T WANT TO PRESIDE AS GOVERNOR OVER A SESSION OF THIS LEGISLATURE DEDICATED TO PARTISANSHIP.

I THINK THE PEOPLE OF ILLINOIS WANT AND DESERVE A SESSION DEDICATED TO PARTNERSHIP.

ONLY BY WORKING TOGETHER -- BY PUTTING THE INTEREST OF OUR STATE ABOVE THE INTEREST OF OUR PARTIES -- CAN WE MEET THE CHALLENGES BEFORE US.

REPRESENTATIVE BILL BLACK ONCE SAID IN DEBATE --RIGHT HERE -- ON THIS HOUSE FLOOR -- IN HIS USUAL CALM, MEASURED AND SOFT-SPOKEN WAY -- "I'LL WALK THROUGH THIS CHAMBER IN MY BARE FEET ON CRUSHED GLASS IF YOU WANT."

**I SURE HOPE --
IT DOESN'T COME TO THAT.**

BUT I WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES -- TO WORK WITH YOU -- TO LEAD ILLINOIS THROUGH THIS CRISIS AND TO MOVE OUR STATE FORWARD.

I WANT TO END TODAY -- EXACTLY WHERE I BEGAN.

WHAT I AM MOVED BY MOST -- AS I TRAVEL THROUGH THIS STATE -- EVEN THOUGH OUR NATION IS ON THE VERGE OF WAR, -- WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF TERRORIST ATTACKS, --

A RECESSION, -- AND HERE AT HOME, --

A BUDGET DEFICIT, AND A CRISIS IN STATE GOVERNMENT --

WHAT I AM MOST MOVED BY -- ARE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE I MEET -- GOOD, HONEST, HARD WORKING PEOPLE --WHO WANT A STATE THEY CAN BELIEVE IN -- AND A FUTURE THEY CAN LOOK FORWARD TO.

THEY KNOW WHAT WE'RE GOING THROUGH TODAY.

THEY KNOW THE CHALLENGES WE FACE.

BUT THEY WANT US TO DO THESE THINGS.

THEY WANT FIRST CLASS SCHOOLS. --

THEY WANT A HEALTH SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES FOR EVERYONE. --

THEY WANT US TO BE A STATE THAT ONCE AGAIN --DREAMS BIG DREAMS --- AND TRIES DARING SOLUTIONS.

IF WE CAN BE AS BOLD AS THE HISTORY THAT CARRIED US HERE, -- AS PROUD AS THE PEOPLE WHO SENT US, -- AND AS BIG AS THE FUTURE AHEAD OF US, -- I BELIEVE WE WILL BE ABLE TO DREAM BIG DREAMS AGAIN.

WE WILL BE PROUD OF THIS STATE AGAIN.

AND WE WILL MAKE THIS GREAT PLACE -- A BETTER PLACE -- FOR EVERYONE.

THANK YOU -- AND GOD BLESS YOU.